



## **RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES**

**SPECIAL MEETING  
Thursday, August 11, 2016**

**Board Members in Attendance:** Chairman Bob Pierce, Vice-Chair Todd Dunnuck, Pat Dennehy, Helen Hyatt, Barry Mundt, Dean Pistor

**Staff in Attendance:** Sandra Travis, Dee Black, Allison Dains, John Gavin, Pete Wall, Polly McDaniel, Roderick Simmons, Debbie Ivester

### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Pierce called the meeting to order at 12:31 pm.

### **2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chairman Pierce asked the Board to consider approval of the minutes from the July 11, 2016 Board meeting. Vice-Chair Todd Dunnuck motioned to pass the minutes as written; Pat Dennehy seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously.

### **3. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

#### **a. Report: Haywood Street Community Visioning Advisory Team – Dean Pistor**

Dean reported the team's second meeting went well. The first meeting was not as productive since he felt there was too much power in the room and uneducated questions being asked. He reported that conversations were side barred by people other than those on the advisory team attending. The advisory team has been provided excellent informative materials and also took a site visit to show the public what it will mean when they discuss certain plans. The team is starting to get cohesive on the vision for the park and doing a good job balancing everyone's vision. The team's most recent assignment is to provide three questions to be filtered at their next meeting. Dean questions are: 1) is the goal of City Council going to be met by the decisions made today, 2) fiscally and ideally, what will be the financial impact to Parks and Recreation, and 3) will Parks and Recreation have to maintain what is being built or will it be self-generating.

Debbie Ivester asked if the Urban Trail Station Guastivino Monument was brought up at the meeting as it is located in the area under discussion and if so, would the plan be to have it moved within the park? Dean said that no, it was not brought up at the meeting but he would make sure to do so at the next meeting. In the meantime, Debbie Ivester will check in with staff member Brenda Mills regarding the station.

Chairman Pierce asked about the feasibility of renovating the Thomas Wolfe Auditorium and what the timeline is. Dean replied that it had been brought up due to the unsafe traffic pattern and that one of the solutions is to build a bridge over the traffic but that the point of that was more about connectivity. Dean told the Board that the next meeting will be next week.

**b. Report: Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee – Helen Hyatt**

Helen reported the Committee had its first meeting with 13 people from the community in attendance. The idea behind the re-visioning project is that City Council needs to update the existing plan due to the population growth. The current plan is static and doesn't allow change. The current plan projected 90,000 residents by year 2025 but in 2016 it has already hit 87,000 residents; 15 years ahead of schedule. The committee is on phase two now. The preliminary assessment is complete and staff are working to get it presentable to the public. The title for the report is still a work in progress. There is an online survey that will be open for one month to get the public's opinion on priorities. It will take 20 to 25 minutes to complete the survey. Polly McDaniel reported the link is on the City's homepage as Open Asheville. Bob stated it requires registration to take the survey. Polly clarified it is not required but it is strongly preferred to help ensure the City is not getting outsider influence. The goal is to get 1,000 responses with the minimum set at 100. Dean stated the Board could push the link out to all their colleagues and peers to help. Helen reported the next committee meeting is September 27.

**c. Bond Referendum 2016**

Roderick Simmons reported City Council approved the bond referendum to be on placed on the ballot for the November election. Now the Board needs to get the word out to ensure future growth for Parks and Recreation. The proposed bond will be the most money that has ever been invested in parks. The bond money will not add new facilities, but will allow Parks and Recreation to improve what we already have. If Parks and Recreation has funds in the bond, it will free up money in the budget for up-keep and allow Parks and Recreation to create an actual maintenance schedule for the facilities. In the packets provided to the Board are documents that outline how Parks and Recreation plans to move forward. The sheet titled Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) shows current projects and the project managers. The back page details deferred maintenance projects and current timelines. The last sheet is a list of projects the department will contract out since we don't have the staff capacity to complete them in a timely manner. Dean Pistor asked to clarify if these were architect and engineer projects. Roderick replied yes they are third party projects.

Vice Chair Todd Dunnuck pointed out it appears the Nature Center front entrance project received no bids. Roderick responded this is correct so the department will put the project back out for bids. Dean asked about the status of the John B. Soccer Complex turf replacement. Roderick reported it too will be put back out to bid. The engineering company responsible for reviewing the bids mishandled it so City Council voted to reject all bids and have staff handle the process moving forward. The timeline has been pushed back to spring 2017. Dean stated three children on one team have had concussions recently. John Gavin responded Asheville Buncombe Youth Soccer Association is paying to have engineers even out the existing material to help with the shock absorption.

Dean asked about the status of the Carrier Park project. Pete Wall reported the inline hockey rink project is on schedule and the league should be back on it mid-September. The building renovation is on schedule to finish late fall to early winter, and is also on budget. Dean then inquired about the status of the old ice hockey rink purchased by the Roller Hockey League, and if the City has made a decision to buy it back. Roderick explained it is his understanding the issue was closed and that the hockey league had bought it back. Roderick stated he will confirm and let the Board know. Todd asked if the Beaucatcher Greenway listed on the project document is referring to the building of the actual greenway. Roderick confirmed it is actual greenway construction and should go out for bid shortly.

Roderick then presented the 10-year CIP list. Debbie pointed out if the Bond passes there will still be a CIP budget that will fund projects not included in the bond. Pat Dennehy asked the status of creating a flatter field at Memorial Stadium. Roderick responded the Bond will free up money to address that and other needs. He stated Parks and Recreation can now move forward with the plans for Memorial Stadium and be proactive with programming. Bob Pierce commented that with the bond maintenance costs will be going down. Roderick agreed and pointed out operational cost savings the bond will allow Parks and Recreation to apply money to other facilities and create more flexibility and options.

Roderick then presented the bond proposal packet. Dean Pistor asked how the City plans to educate the public about the bond. Roderick responded that the Communications and Public Engagement office is working to create a unified message that he will disseminate to Board so they can pass it on to their groups. Dean inquired if there will be open information sessions to the public so they can learn more. Roderick said yes and it is up to the Board and how they would like to handle it. The bond proposal packet includes a map that lays out locations of proposed projects. Helen asked if all the projects on the map are actually to be done or are they just proposed changes. Roderick confirmed they are all projects that will be accomplished if the bond passes. Dean pointed out the Board needs to make sure the people of south Asheville know the Bond will give them \$2 million for their location so that they vote for the bond. Helen asked about the Grant Southside center and if the concept drawing is actually what it will look like. Roderick responded the concept drawing will be a smaller footprint. Instead of having three phases it will be just two, the final phase combining two and three. The concept drawing is essentially the same with a few tweaks to the building.

Bob Pierce asked what the timeline for the bond money would be. Roderick responded the City will have seven years to complete the projects. The Grant Southside Center and Montford Center improvements should take the longest at most approximately 18 months to completion. Roderick projected Parks and Recreation should have everything done in three to four years and could move on to spending the \$2 million in the CIP budget. Dean inquired if it was possible, since City Council member's change, if they could change the bond projects. Roderick replied yes and no. Yes, they legally have the right to do that, but it wouldn't be done politically because it is a matter being voted on by the public. Polly McDaniel clarified the money would still have to be used on Parks and Recreation projects, but they could choose to change the projects the money goes towards.

Dean asked if the Grant Southside Center greenway would connect the two apartment complexes nearby to the center. Roderick stated one already does, and the other will eventually connect via a greenway. Dean pointed out we should let that community know so they vote in favor of the bond. Bob replied it will be hard to get the Haw Creek community vote because there is nothing planned for East Asheville. Roderick responded that Parks and Recreation recommended the improvements to the Charlie Bullman Park be included in the bond but it was too expensive for the \$17 million bond package. However the bond package will free up CIP money that can be put into Bullman Park which is on the top of the list for park improvements.

Debbie Ivester presented the list of stakeholders from the Board's last meeting regarding the bond. She stated now is the time to start planning opportunities where they can present information about the bond to the public. Todd asked if one large Parks and Recreation stakeholder meeting could be arranged when all the groups come together to hear the same information. He realizes the City cannot advocate for the bond but that we need to give people information in order

for them to make educated decisions. Polly McDaniel said she would bring the idea to her manager Dawa Hitch to have presentations based on the voter categories of the bond. Roderick clarified there will be three bond categories on the ballot: Parks and Recreation, Economic Development, and Transportation Projects. Todd commented that's why we want people to know the Parks and Recreation perspective, so that when they are voting to raise taxes three different times, we make sure people check our box.

Todd also suggested doing an expo to coordinate all the groups together where we could have a breakdown of how everyone will be benefiting from the bond. Dean asked Polly if the City could use their media contacts to invite them to cover it. Polly reported the City is currently working on a project page on the City's website to house all the information regarding the bond in one place. Staff is also creating a power point presentation the Board could use. All this information will be pushed out via social media and the media outlets the City has relationships with. She stated City Council is working with the Chamber of Commerce to promote it. Debbie Ivester asked if a city facility could be used for an expo or if it would be better not too. Polly replied she will look into that issue. Helen Hyatt suggested the Board divide the stakeholders list up by the groups. Todd clarified it would be best to go through the Communications office on whether a group has already been approached so that they are not duplicating efforts. Dean pointed to LEAF as a large group who could help us promote. Helen stated she knows LEAF staff and will approach her about helping with this. Bob asked to add CAN and RAD to the list of stakeholders. Todd recommended adding the Brewers Alliance. Debbie stated she will send out the list again so Board members can suggest additions and then the Board can break down who will approach which group. Polly stated City Council normally will appoint a committee to promote the bond. In this case the Chamber of Commerce will form the promotion committee. Dean asked if there is a way to get a Board member on that bond committee or how to get in touch with them through the Chamber of Commerce to let them know the Board is interested in helping. Polly recommended contacting the Mayor directly to let her know the Boards desire to have a member on the committee. Dean volunteered to take the lead by contacting the Mayor and to serve as the representative on the Chamber's committee.

Debbie clarified the course of action moving forward will be: 1) she will send out the list of stakeholders for the Board to provide feedback, 2) the Board will wait on materials and more information to be provided by the City's Communications office, and 3) Dean will move forward to contact the Mayor regarding the Chamber of Commerce bond promotional committee.

#### **4. NEW BUSINESS**

No new business

#### **5. DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

No report

#### **6. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Roy Harris took the floor. He started by saying he has been a resident of Asheville for 33 years. He recently retired and started taking walks around his neighborhood in the Southside area starting with walking the outside, then working his way through the middle. He said he had not realized how much has moved in. Now he is looking at Asheville differently. Instead of knowing he is going to live out his life here, he finds himself asking am I going to stay here? The things the Board has been discussing will have a big impact on that decision. He advised the Board to keep neighborhoods and families in mind as they are making decisions. He let the Board know he is involved with The Grant Southside Center improvements and they are themselves trying to figure out how to get

stakeholders involved. Roderick asked him to speak to the Board about the decision process. Roy stated everybody has a stake but what we don't know is which stake. Some tools/decisions that appear easy are very complicated at another level. We have to figure out how to get everybody to sing out of the same hymn book and on the same page.

Chairman Pierce thanked him for his comments and encouraged him to come back and participate in future meetings.

Dean Pistor circled back to the bond referendum and asked if Council Liaison Keith Young could be a proponent for the bond? Polly told him that yes, all of Council could be. Roderick stated that getting to this point has been a challenging process. The Parks and Recreation staff has been very involved to get to this milestone and he appreciates what staff has done and how they have managed to keep things going with him being pulled in other directions. The Chair agreed that the City staff is great and they make the impossible possible.

#### **7. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

The Swimming Pool Assessment report will be presented at the next meeting. Roderick stated it will be available to the Board before it is released to the public. Todd commented he has seen a movement in other states toward splash pads instead of keeping maintenance heavy pools and he feels it's great we will be able to include another splash pad at the Grant Southside Center.

#### **8. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Bob Peirce adjourned the meeting at 2:07 p.m.